

TOOK HALF IN RATS.

How China's Dowager Empress Mitigated the Force of the Pestilence.

A recent number of the North China Herald, just received in this city, tells this story of the Empress Dowager of China:

"A rather good story is told among the Chinese about the empress dowager and the plague. The empress keeps constantly burning, day and night, in her palace, eighteen lamps, which represent the eighteen provinces of China. Not long ago one of the lamps, although it received precisely the same attention as all the others, was burning very badly, and the empress sent for the chief imperial astronomer to learn the reason. The chief astronomer having carefully considered the matter and consulted the archives, told the empress that the lamp which was burning so badly represented the province of Canton, which was about to be afflicted with a serious epidemic, in which the god of pestilence had determined to take off eight-tenths of the people.

"The empress was very much concerned at being told this, and asked the chief astronomer how such a dreadful doom might be averted from eight-tenths of her people in the province. The chief astronomer said that the god might perhaps be moved by prayer and offerings, and everything was done to placate him by the empress dowager's orders. After this the chief astronomer was asked what success had been achieved, and, after much consideration and consultation, he replied that the god of pestilence had consented to compromise—but this was absolutely the best he could do—for four-tenths human beings and four-tenths rats. Thus the frightful mortality of rats and human beings at Canton this spring is explained."

HAVE THEIR OWN METHODS.

The Cassowaries Pursue a Plan of Their Own for Catching Fish.

The methods employed by the cassowary in catching fish differ materially from those of the common fish-hawk. The fish-hawk employs very much the same methods as the birds of prey, while the cassowary fishes according to a method of its own and uses a good deal of strategy. A number of years ago I was standing near the bank of a river when I saw a cassowary come down to the water's edge and stand for some minutes, apparently watching the water carefully. It then stepped into the river where it was about two feet deep, and, squatting down, spread its wings out, submerged them, the feathers being spread and ruffled. The bird remained perfectly motionless and kept its eye closed, as if in sleep. It remained in this position at least half an hour, when it suddenly closed its wings, and, straightening its feathers, stepped out on the bank. Here it shook itself several times, whereupon a number of small fishes fell out of its wings from amid its feathers, which the bird immediately picked up and swallowed. The fishes had evidently mistaken the feathers for a kind of weed that grows along the river bank and which resembles

bles the feathers of the cassowary. The smaller fishes often seek a hiding-place in these weeds to avoid the larger ones that prey upon them.

TIME AT THE NORTH POLE.

The Man Who First Reaches That Point Will Meet with Surprises.

If ever the north pole is reached the adventurous spirits who get there will find that they have actually outstripped Father Time altogether; in fact, he will have given up the rate entirely, for at the northern and southern extremities of the earth's axis, there is no fixed time at all, says the London Globe. At any moment it can be noon or midnight, breakfast time or supper time, work time or play time, whichever one likes. Clocks will be a fraud and delusion, for at the pole all degrees of longitude converge into one, and therefore all times. The possibilities of such a position are endless. Not only, too, will the clocks be out, but the calendar as well. It can be, at will, either yesterday or to-day, or tomorrow. We have heard a lot of foolish people ask what the use and pleasure can be of getting to the north pole, but a little reflection will show us advantages can be gained there which cannot be found in any other part of the globe. There, at any rate, instead of being like the poor inhabitants of lower latitudes, the slaves of time, we can turn the tables and be its masters.

THE GERMAN'S JOKE.

The Cute Smoker Plays His Game and Has It Returned.

The following "Fraud Upon an Insurance Company," in the Deutsche Tabak-Zeitung, is certainly just a little too good to be true: A cunning fellow, who wanted to smoke the best cigars at the cheapest possible cost, bought one thousand cigars of the highest quality and corresponding price, and immediately insured the whole stock. When he had smoked the last of them he demanded seven hundred and fifty marks from the insurance company on the ground that the whole of his insured stock, ten boxes of cigars, had been consumed by fire! The Solomonian court decided in favor of the plaintiff.

The company then brought an action of conspiracy against the smoker, accusing him of having intentionally put fire to his own cigars and deliberately destroyed his property. Hereupon the same wise court condemned the insured smoker to three months' imprisonment.

Origin of the Walking Stick.

Probably the patriarch's staff was the first adaptation of the walking stick and from its first inception to the present day it has undergone almost endless changes. In 1701 footmen attending gentlemen were forbidden to carry swords, these being replaced by a porter's staff. Thirty years later gentlemen were forbidden to carry swords, but allowed to carry large oak sticks. Before many years varnished and polished woods with ornamental heads came into use and in one form or another have held their own in public popularity.

LOST CARNOT'S HAT.

In the Excitement of the Moment Another Man Wore It Away.

A strange incident, by the way, marked the last days spent by Mme. Carnot in the palace which had been her home for seven anxious years. She desired to preserve as precious relics for her family all the articles of dress worn by her husband at the moment when he was struck down by the assassin's hand. These were carefully collected and sent to her, but the hat alone was missing, and it was supposed to have been lost in the confusion of that fatal drive. It appears, however, that among the first to offer medical help as the victim lay on his deathbed at the prefecture was Dr. Girard, the mayor of Charbonnières.

When other surgeons took charge of the case this gentleman discreetly withdrew and was looking for his hat, whereupon Col. Chamoin handed one to him. He put it on and went home, thinking it was his own, for it fitted him exactly. Not until some days later he cast his eyes on this article of headgear as it hung in his hall, examined it more closely and found it marked inside with a "C" did he recognize his mistake. The lost hat was forthwith restored and Mme. Carnot acknowledged its receipt in a letter expressing her heartfelt thanks.

A Notable Event.

When Queen Victoria travels, an engine is carefully selected, in charge of an experienced engineer and fireman. A pilot engine always precedes the royal train, and no train is allowed to cross the main line for half an hour before the time for the queen to pass. The gates at all grade crossings are locked, all shifting operations are suspended and an army of track-walkers are on duty to remove any obstruction from the line. In addition to all this, a telegram is sent from every station heralding her approach. Altogether, it must be quite an event when her majesty takes a trip, but the general traveling public cannot enjoy it.

Continents Named for Women.

Three great divisions of the globe took their names from feminine originals—Asia from a nymph of that name, Europe from Europa, the daughter of Agenor, and Africa from Libya, or Aphrica, the daughter of Epaphus. And the fourth quarter, America, though named for a man, has been given a feminine ending.

How to Prepare Frozen Coffee.

Measure four heaping tablespoonfuls of pulverized coffee. Put into a farina-boulet and pour over it one quart of fresh boiled water, cover the boiler and stand it over the fire for ten minutes. Then strain through two thicknesses of cheese cloth, add half a pound of sugar, stir until the sugar is dissolved, and when cold drop in the white of one egg unbeaten, half a pint of cream and turn it at once into the freezer. Freeze as you would a sherbet, stirring carefully but continuously. Serve in glasses as quickly as frozen.—Household News.